AN APPEAL TO REASON CONCERNING GOD AND HIS WORD

By J. C. Blaney

There is a certain class of people who do not believe that God exists, and who consequently do not accept the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. An appeal to the Bible for proof of the existence of God is to them without weight. Seemingly they are not able to recognize the difference between the Word of God and other so-called sacred writings. To them the heathen and the Christian are equally superstitious and are following man-made fallacies. As they openly question the downfall of man from holi-

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ness into sin, and the consequent need of atonement for sin, they can not accept the gospel. A skeptical view of the reality of heaven, the resurrection, future punishment, the need of prayer, or any particular kind of religious faith, is the inevitable result.

The main excuse that this class offer in defense of their disbelief is that the light of human reason is sufficient, placing us beyond the need of a revelation of the will of God such as the Scriptures claim to be. Let us, then, appeal to the testimony of reason concerning a few plain facts that have a vital connection with the matters under consideration.

The Nature of Reason

Reason is the faculty of the mind that enables man to put together intelligently relative facts, and evidences that clearly point to facts, and from these to form or come to correct conclusions. If the facts and the evidences on hand are insufficiently clear to the reasoning faculty, there will still remain the doubt that hinders acceptance, although the facts may truly exist. It must be remembered, too, that reason may be hampered by prejudice, or preconceived ideas that are erroneous, thus forming wrong estimates

or reaching wrong conclusions. Then again, reason, being a natural faculty, may be imperfect, and consequently very erratic, resultant from constitutional mental infirmity, or disease. There are, however, some plain facts that reason will accept and testify to unless the testimony of this faculty is stifled by a love of darkness rather than light. We will now consider a few plain facts that reasonable minds can not escape noticing.

Reason as a Religious Guide

Fact 1. *Man's reason without a revelation from God is insufficient as a guide in matters of religion.*

Skeptics make extraordinary claims for the powers of human reason. They suppose that if others would do the same amount of serious and profound thinking that they themselves do, all would be led to the same conclusion.

We now ask the reader to help us do a little thinking on this point, and to be honest enough to let reason make her voice heard. If the reasoning faculty is sufficient to enlighten us concerning the existence or non-existence of God and the future existence of man, or to lead us to a correct decision as to the advisability of having any religious belief at all, why

has it not proved sufficient in ten thousands of instances where no divine revelation was followed? If reason without a revelation from God is sufficient, why do those who make such extraordinary claims to its efficiency not give to the world some tangible proof of their claims?

For thousands of years a large part of the earth's inhabitants have lived ignorant of the Christian's God. Human reason has been left to itself, unhampered by the claims of the Bible. Why have all those nations been led in so many different ways regarding the existence or non-existence of God? In India, where for centuries the Bible was unknown, the people have deified three hundred and thirty million objects. This is but one country, but it is fairly representative of other peoples who have not accepted the Christian's God and who do not worship him as he prescribes. Why does reason not teach and lead all those people, who, generally speaking, may be considered of normal intelligence, to see the inconsistency of such a state?

If some one objects to these queries on the ground that those people are not civilized, we answer: Ancient Egypt was civilized, and so were Assyria, Greece, and Rome. They had among them many wise

and talented men, many great orators and statesmen; but they were far from giving any tangible evidence to the world that human reason unaided by divine revelation would lead men unerringly regarding religion.

Reason as a Moral Support

Fact 2. *These nations and individuals who have not the light of divine revelation are not able to live a good, moral life.*

Skeptics concerning God and the Bible generally admit that it is of universal importance to live a moral life. They say that reason teaches that we should, and think that if we do this nothing more is necessary. The more refined among this class say that we should love our neighbor and do all the good we can in the world. I should like to have the reader do a little thinking on this fact.

Now, if reason were a sufficient guide to man in religion, we should naturally expect to find the highest type of virtue and goodness among those who trusted to its light unaided by divine revelation. The more ignorant they were concerning the Christian's idea of God, the more readily they could succeed in conforming their lives to the highest ideals of morality and goodness now known to exist among men. The higest ideals of goodness and

virtue now advocated and exemplified among any people could then be traced to an individual or class of individuals who did not make any pretense to believe in God or to possess as a rule of faith and practise any thing claiming to be a revelation from God. The idea that all men should love each other and be ready to help the needy and to abstain from adultery, theft, murder, dishonesty, covetousness, polygamy, slavery, and war, would be advocated and practised first among the people who did not believe in the Deity or a deity of any kind. And the origin of those noble virtues so consistent with reason would be easily traced to such a class of individuals among men.

We do not find it so, but exactly to the contrary. Search the archives of history, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, for the proof of what we affirm. Our present ideals of virtue and goodness originated not with atheists, skeptics, or pagans, but with the Christ proclaimed in the Christian's Bible, the Word of God.

For thousands of years the world has tolerated immorality and wickedness of the most revolting character. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece, and Rome, the cradles of ancient civilization, possessed comparatively few of the

virtues, and all the vices, that we have mentioned. When Jesus Christ and his apostles introduced the gospel to the Gentile world, the state of society was exceedingly corrupt. Socrates and Plato had lived and taught and died, but their teachings were still extant. Some of those ancient sages had dim glimpses of higher ideals than were at that time prevalent, not because they did not believe in a deity, but because they doubted the popular gods of the age, and suspected that there was an unknown God who had not yet been revealed. But their ideals were not followed by any considerable number, so that they counted for little in favor of a reformation. One writer has said concerning the state of Roman society in the days of primitive Christianity, that every married Roman lady was willing to prostitute herself if she got her price.

What force or influence permeated the mass of spiritual and moral rottenness existing at that time, and established a standard of virtue, chastity, and righteousness by which we can measure right and wrong? Was it the arguments and reasonings of men who did not believe in God or who claimed they had not facts on hand to prove the existence of God? Was it the result of reason unaided by what

was claimed as a divine revelation? Material and historical facts have so educated and convinced Reason that her only answer to these questions must always be, "No; it was the gospel of Jesus Christ, backed up by the holy, devoted lives of the Christians."

It is very singular that up to the time of the introduction of Christianity almost all the nations had practised and legalized slavery, with scarcely a protest from the public conscience. The sacrificing of human beings for religion and to grace holiday occasions was a matter of course, and was participated in by the fairest and most refined ladies, as well as by men. But in every nation that has come under the influence of the gospel, these practises have been abolished. Why did not somebody who was in doubt about the existence of God do something that would arouse people to a sense of injustice concerning these practises? Reason answers, "Because unaided and unenlightened reason was not a sufficient guide to lead men to act right."

But Christianity, through the power of the Christ of the Bible, has not abolished all evil in every individual or nation that has been permitted to bask in its beautiful light and feel its benign influence. The

reason for this is apparent to all who have the courage to stand erect in the face of facts and think. Not all men who have come in contact with the gospel have sincerely believed it, and many have rejected and scoffed at it. Yet directly and indirectly we owe our present improved state of social and political conditions to the gospel. Wherever men strictly adhere to its faith and practises, the practise of the most refined virtues is invariably apparent. The highest ideals of goodness and righteousness are found best exemplified among those who believe humbly and devoutly in the sublime teaching of the gospel.

Men in France imbibed the idea that reason was man's only reliable guide in religion, and the terrible outcome proved to succeding generations the fallacy of such doctrine. The representatives of that unfortunate and miserable people professed to dethrone the true God and to enthrone Reason. The most appropriate representative of this human faculty they could find to deify and pay their homage to was a beautiful woman whose moral purity was a matter of open question. This was followed by that notorious period in the history of that country called the Reign of Terror.

Inexcusable Ignorance

The man or woman who does not see any evidence of God from the proofs placed before us, everywhere we go reminds us of the man who would turn his back toward the blazing light of the sun, shut his eyes, and declare he could not believe there was any sun, and did not have any facts on hand to prove its existence.

What would you think of a blind man who, having never seen the sun, would not be convinced of the existence of that orb? You would take him outside into the heat of the day, ask him if he felt warm, explain to him the appearance of the sun, and leave him there until gradually that heat-giving body disappeared below the western horizon and he felt the chill of the cool evening air upon him. You would then explain to him the daily rotation of the earth, thus accounting for the disappearance of the sun each evening and its reappearance in the opposite direction every morning.

When the weather grew cold and the snow came, he could not see the snow, but he could feel it, and by a simple test he could prove that heat would cause it to melt and turn to water. In a few months rain and heat would take away the snow,

allowing him once more to bask in the warm sunlight, although he could not see the sun. You would then lead him out into the fields where he could feel the grass and smell the flowers. You would explain how vegetation is made to grow by the action of the sun, telling him that the sun not only affords light and heat, but also brings moisture, causing vapor to arise from bodies of water and to be carried about by winds until it falls upon the earth in the form of rain. You would explain to him that his health depended largely upon the influence of the sun and that no life or growth would exist without it.

Of course to his natural vision all would be as dark as though the sun did not exist; but after all the other evidences had been placed before him, and his father, mother, brothers, sisters, friends, and neighbors had repeatedly brought him in touch with every evidence except a sight of the sun, would it not seem plausible that he would believe in the existence of that wonderful orb of light? But suppose that for all this he would not believe it; that he would say he could not believe, since there were not sufficient facts at hand to prove the point. Should we not certainly consider him either wilfully ignorant or possessed

of a very erratic faculty of reason? But such a man would be in no more need of our sympathy and pity than is the individual who says he can not believe in God, maintaining that there are not sufficient facts at hand by which the existence of God may be proved.

Fact 3. *Men who say they do not believe the Bible to be a revelation from God usually are wilfully ignorant of facts that they could readily learn and that would make it easy for them to believe.*

Some allowance may be made for the ignorance of those whose education and religious surroundings have made it hard for them to acquaint themselves with facts well-known to readers of ancient and modern history and to students of the Bible.

A singular love of ignorance and darkness is exhibited by those who are acquainted with historical facts, ancient and modern. Old Testament Scriptures contain a great many prophecies concerning nations, countries, and individuals. It is a well-known and established fact that the Jews are a very old nation and that their language is very ancient. The historical records of the Jews have been more carefully preserved than those of any other nation. Their sacred writings are, and

have always been, held in high esteem by the noblest among men. Besides these sacred writings, a faithful history of the Jewish nation from its birth to the destruction of its polity by the fall of Jerusalem, its capital, has been written and preserved. Flavius Josephus is the author of this excellent work.

There are other histories that record facts that no one questions. Why do men who disbelieve God and the claims of the Bible accept certain records in history concerning other things and ignore or reject those substantiating the Bible? They believe, for instance, that Babylon was a city of vast proportions and of immense wealth, the seat of a once powerful kingdom that ruled the then known world, because it is a well-known fact in the records of history. But there is also abundant evidence that two Hebrew prophets foretold the downfall of this great city at a time when such an occurrence was very unlikely. These prophets were Isaiah and Jeremiah. If we say this happened by chance, we encounter some difficulties that baffle reason to explain satisfactorily.

Old Testament Prophecies Proved True by History

It is singular that those two prophets, speaking at different times and under different circumstances, should select as an object of dire prediction that particular city, and this at a time when it was at the summit of its glory and free from symptoms of such a gloomy fate. A city of very ancient origin, situated favorably in the midst of an exceedingly rich, fertile country, the capital city of a mighty kingdom, a metropolis enjoying extraordinary prosperity and bright prospects, there were great obstacles in the way of any man's predicting the downfall of Babylon and prefixing his prophecy with "Thus saith the Lord."

But, of course, cities often lose their greatness, and a prophecy against some particular city might, if spoken in a general manner, be fulfilled some time in the future. But if the particulars of the manner, and the name of the people who were to be the first to start the fulfilment of such a prophecy, are expressly given, when there is no visible evidence that such a thing could come to pass, and it happens just that way, we certainly have an extraordinary train of circumstances, and a

situation that reason, unaided by divine revelation, can not explain.

Isaiah foretold the fall of Babylon nearly two hundred years before it fell. He described in detail many important things connected with its downfall. He stated, for example, the name of the nation whose army and king first took possession of it. The prophecies are found in the following places: Isa. 13; 14: 4; 21: 2-9; 47: 48; Jer. 25: 12-14; 50 and 51. Study those prophecies, and many others equally important. History proves they were fulfilled in a manner which shows that prophets plainly forsaw that which it was impossible for mere humanity to forsee without the aid of divine revelation.

The prophecies concerning Babylon are no more important and wonderful than many others. We could call special attention also to predictions concerning Egypt, Assyria, Nineveh, Tyre, and other cities, in which important particulars were mentioned many years before they came to pass. We could dwell at length on how wonderfully Isaiah foretold the seventy years' captivity of the Jews in Babylon and Chaldea, and on how he foretold the name of the Persian king that was to release the Jews from their captivity, two hundred years before his birth; but we

pass them by and invite the reader to look them up and see for himself the facts that no amount of human reason or science can explain, except by belief in the Christian's God.

Christ's Prophecy Proved True by History

Reference might also be made to the prophecy uttered by our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish polity. How these wonderful facts stare the atheist and the deist in the face while they say, "There is no God, no revelation; no need of one"! Jesus said that the city of Jerusalem would be taken, that the temple would be so completely destroyed that not one stone would be left on another, and that the city would be overrun by Gentiles for a long period of time. Titus, the Roman commander-in-chief, laid seige to the city with a powerful army, and, after reducing it to a state of starvation, captured it, destroyed the temple, and, it is said, dug up the foundations and sowed the sacred precincts with barley. This was in A. D. 70. Years rolled on, but the temple was not rebuilt. The Jews have always been a devoutly religious people. They loved their religion, and they sadly mourned the desolation of the holy city

and the sacred temple. They are a people who quickly amass large amounts of earthly riches. This temple had been partially destroyed more than once before and had always been rebuilt. Would not the Jews now make a bold attempt to rebuild it, and restore their ancient forms of worship? Would not some bold, powerful man of influence take the lead and rebuild this holy house?

Julian, the Roman emperor, also called "The Apostate," was just the type of man for the undertaking. He was a man of boldness and power, and he hated Christ and the Christians. He decided that he would prove Jesus to be a liar by building the temple and restoring the Jewish worship. He had the men, the money, and a powerful army to back up the undertaking. Besides, the Jews gladly and heartily cooperated with him to prove the fallacy of the prediction of the hated Nazarene. It is said that even the rich ladies were seen carrying earth and rubbish in their silver veils in order to help hasten and insure the success of the undertaking. One writer asserts that it was a trial of strength between God and man, heaven and earth; the Gentile and the Jewish world arrayed against the man of Galilee. Julian and his mighty host of

Jews and Gentiles failed in their enterprise, and the words of the Son of the living God prevailed. History tells us why they were compelled to abandon the work. Horrible balls of fire broke out from the foundations, and so blasted and scorched the workmen again and again that they were obliged to quit. The temple has never been rebuilt. See Horne's Introduction, Vol. 1, page 130, with footnotes; Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; also The cause and Cure of Infidelity, by Nelson.

How does it happen that those who inquire after facts such as we have here presented may find reasonable proof of them, while those who do not believe in God and his revealed Word do not appear to know anything about them? Reason tells us why: it is because those men are wilfully ignorant of some things they might know if they would make an effort to learn them. A singular love of darkness rather than light keeps them in ignorance of the truth.

Earth, Sea, and Sky Testify to the Existence of God

There is a very large and interesting field of study in nature for the one who is searching for proofs of the existence of an intelligent Creator. Man's mind recoils at the thought that all the objects in the natural world came by chance. Reader,

we again ask you to do a little thinking for yourself.

Suppose this generation had never seen or heard of a watch. One day a man finds a beautifully engraved hunting-case watch. On picking it up, he discovers that it makes a peculiar ticking noise. His curiosity being aroused, he carries it home, and after some examination he succeeds in getting it open. He is struck with amazement at the wonderful interior mechanism. He carries the watch to his neighbors and friends, and they all wonder what it is, but some of them say it is composed of metals that just happened to come together in that particular form.

After further investigation they discover many facts about the watch. They find that after some hours it will cease ticking, but that if the stem is turned a few times the ticking is resumed. The more they study the thing, the more wonderful it seems, and finally the general conclusion is reached that some designing mind and personality planned the mechanism and that it is absurd to think of its happening by chance. But there are a few who still can not believe that the watch came into existence by being made, insisting that by some process of nature it just happened to be so. Reader, which of those men are following the testimony of reason in reaching their conclusions?

There are ten thousand facts in the natural world around us, and within the scope of intelligent inquiry, that plainly declare the existence of an omnipotent,

infinite Creator of incomparable intelligence and wisdom, who designed and carried into execution the creation and adjustment of the universe. A mind undwarfed by infidelity and ignorance can not be satisfied with the explanation of the materialistic evolution, or happen-so theory.

The millions of planets and other heavenly bodies, which for thousands of years have followed with exactness and clockwork regularity their prescribed orbits, are no less wonderful than the mechanism of the most intricate and delicate machinery of today. If some one would tell this generation that a watch, a modern printing-press, or a phonograph could be by mere chance, he would be justly considered foolish, and his hypothesis would be ridiculed and scoffed at. But although "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork," men in these last days are so foolish as to maintain that they can not believe in God. How appropriate are the words of King David, "The *fool* hath said in his heart, there is no God"!

Belief in Revelation Reasonable

Since the design of an infinitely wise and all-powerful Creator is demonstrated in the natural world, and since a race of highly intelligent beings are living for a limited time in that world, with every evidence that much of what was made is for their use and enjoyment, it would seem only reasonable that this wonderful Being would give a message specially suited to the nature and needs of that race. Es-

pecially is this so since there is in every member of that class of beings an inherent desire to learn of and worship Him.

Another strange fact adds to the reasonableness of such a message. Something within every man and woman teaches them the possibility of an existence somewhere after their life here is ended, and the majority of people firmly believe it to be so. For the most part, the human family have also felt that they have sinned against a Supreme Authority—an Authority to whom worship should be rendered and to whom sacrifice should be made on account of sin.

Has this great Cause and Source of life, the Designer of the universe, no message for men, telling them in simple language something about himself? Is it reasonable that he should leave the noblest of his earthly creatures in ignorance of why they were made to exist, what their duty is to him, and what their destiny is? Dear ones would pass away in death with the feeling that future existence is in store for them, but deep mystery would surround and darken their dying moments. "I am taking an awful leap in the dark" is recorded as being the testimony of one prominent disbeliever in divine revelation. This man is but one among the millions who have passed out from this short period of human existence into the uncertainty of the future state.

Would such an all-wise, almighty, infinite Being not give man a reliable guide to pilot him in matters of religious faith and practise? All praise and honor to His glorious name! he has given us just

the very thing needed for this purpose. He has given a Book in which is a simple and consistent account of the creation of the material universe and the origin of man. This account shows why man naturally worships, and explains why there is a universal consciousness of sin among men. He has done more. He has provided a way of escape from the consequences of sin, by providing a Savior—an all-powerful Redeemer from sin. He has in a marvelous manner preserved those records of the human family, entrusting them to such as would carefully aid in upholding their sacredness. God's revelation was made little by little, as his sinful creatures were able to understand the nature of his will, but for nearly nineteen centuries this revelation has existed in full. It is the Holy Bible.

That this book came from God is abundantly proved by its contents. Equally good argument in favor of anything else than this holy book would be readily accepted as conclusive, yet atheists and deists have been assailing this book for hundreds of years. But it has not been hurt in the least by their puerile efforts. Apostate Jewish and Christian professors have aimed to cast it down, but it still lives to bring eternal life, light, and comfort to the wise and humble in heart. Ignorant pagans, armed with imperial authority, have tried by fire, sword, and every other conceivable means, to destroy both its testimony and those who believed its saving truth; but it has proved far too strong for them. Its light and power

crushed their kingdoms to atoms and consigned the fragments to little less than utter oblivion. It is like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces, and a fire that consumes everything combustible.

Notwithstanding the combined efforts of its numerous enemies, the Bible has a larger circulation and is translated into more languages than any other book. Its beautiful light has beamed on every country where the sun sheds its rays, and its refreshing waters have bathed every shore washed by ocean wave. Its power is felt in the heart and seen in the life of every sincere believer in its saving doctrine. It contains a power and holds an inspiration that no other book ever has had. It comes nothing short of the Book of God.

Spiritual Faculties Reliable

A class of proofs which atheists, deists, and skeptics should not overlook, but which they never seem to consider, is: *The evidences arising from the moral and spiritual consciousness and inward experience of those who believe the Bible.*

Men generally consider the testimony of the outward senses, when normal, to be accurate and trustworthy under ordinary circumstances. The courts of our country accept the testimony of witnesses who testify under oath to what they have seen or heard. We see the sun, and we believe it to be the source of light. No amount of argument to the contrary could convince the rest of the world that there is no such an orb of light. We need no argument to con-

vince us of the fact that the sun gives light to the world—is the source of natural light. The fact is self-evident. If some one were to say, "I can not see the sun, therefore I am not sure of its existence," you would need no further proof that he was indeed blind. If he would not accept the testimony of all who have had the normal use of their eyes in all parts of the world and in every age, we should conclude that he was very unreasonable and hard to convince of facts that are accompanied by reasonable proof.

We hear the thunder-peal and see the lightning-flash, and when we have the cause of it explained to us, we accept the explanation as correct, because it appeals to our reason and judgment as being consistent with what we see and hear. We can just as clearly and correctly prove the truth of the Bible through our inward, spiritual senses as we can perceive and prove the existence of the sun through our outward, physical senses. We consider our five cardinal senses—sight, hearing, taste, smell, and feeling—to be perfectly reliable in normal persons. We find no difficulty in accepting their testimony as proof of the existence and reality of ten thousand facts in our every-day life. God has wisely endowed us with the senses as a means of proving these very things.

The Christian reader will note that the evidence of the human senses was considered infallible by the apostles when they preached the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. "To whom he showed himself alive after his passion by many

infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1: 3). Thomas was convinced when he saw the wounds in the body of Jesus (John 20: 27, 28). Here *sight*, *hearing*, and *feeling*, are accepted as "infallible" testimony.

But man is endowed with spiritual and inward faculties of sense that are just as reliable as his physical senses. These faculties are moral and spiritual in their character and scope, and it is partly through the testimony of these that we are convinced of the divine origin of the Bible.

Bible Testimony to Sin and Human Consciousness of Sin

The Bible tells us that all men "have sinned and come short of the glory of God," that there has been but one man who never sinned—Jesus Christ. This sweeping charge against the whole human race is affirmed over and over in many parts of the Bible, and it is implied on nearly every page of this wonderful Book.

Corresponding with this unmistakable declaration, we find knowledge or conviction of sin in the inner consciousness of mankind everywhere. There is no country or tribe, no race or family, it matters not how ignorant or degraded, that have not experienced a conviction of their own individual depravity after passing the innocence of early childhood. This has been true in every country and in every age, and it is true today. Many, if not all,

atheists have experienced this consciousness of sin, although they may now have stifled the conviction so that they are "past feeling."

What the Bible says of man is corroborated by the testimony of his own inner consciousness. He need not be argued into this belief; the proof is self-evident, so that he can not help believing it. When the word of the gospel is preached and the heart thrown open to receive it, this conviction is deepened to such a degree that an effort to conform to the teaching of the Bible will be made even though it may mean the loss of friends, property, and all that the human heart holds dear, even life itself. All this will be cheerfully undergone in order to obtain freedom from sin and its penalty.

The inherent convictions of humanity are also true concerning some other fundamental truths upon which religion is based and especially the religion of the Bible. The immortality of the soul and a future state in which there are punishments and rewards are facts that are corroborated by the testimony of the inner consciousness of men everywhere.

The Bible Accords with Christian Experience

Just as the universal human depravity declared in the Bible is corroborated by the moral and spiritual faculties of sense, so the promises found in the Bible are proved true by the experience of Christians. Those who wish to prove the divine authority of the Scriptures may put the matter to the test by obeying what the Bible tells them. "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psa. 34: 8). Here is a way to test the reality of the living God.

If you should see a man with a basket of strange-looking fruit, claiming for it extraordinary properties that made it very desirable, and he should invite you to taste the fruit and prove his claims for yourself, you would not think the person an impostor nor his goods a fraud. You would naturally expect that there was something honest and genuine about the man and his fruit, or he would not permit such a simple means of proving the truth of his statements to be taken advantage of by his prospective customers.

To the woman of Samaria the Savior said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4: 14). This woman soon proved this to her own satisfaction, and went to tell her countrymen, who, after they had tasted this same life-giving water, said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (John 4: 42). If we obey the gospel, we find experimental proof of God.

Jesus also said: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." All men are challenged

to prove the authority of the Bible. What other system of religious belief has ever been so open to experimental proof as that of the Bible? Those who "have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine" have found that they were "free from sin" and that they became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6: 17, 18).

Before the gospel age the men and women who tested the truth concerning the Deity had an inward testimony that they "pleased God." This inward testimony to the saving truth of the gospel is referred to in a great many places in Scripture, and, what is most remarkable, it is understood by all who have obeyed God from the heart. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31: 33, 34). "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hos. 6: 3). "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8: 16). "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2: 12). "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John 3: 24). "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because

the Spirit is truth." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5: 6, 10).

The Nature of Experimental Testimony Is Accordant with Reason

When the testimony of even a limited number of people agree as to the truth of a certain thing, we generally accept their testimony as true. When many thousands of the best and noblest of our fellow men testify to the reality of a certain thing, we scarcely dare to question its reality. When there are placed before us a number of strange facts of a similar nature that we can ourselves observe and that can be reasonably and consistently explained by the testimony of millions of our fellow men living at different periods of time and in different surroundings, but that can not be otherwise accounted for, we find it hard to resist their testimony.

In this manner are we confronted by the irresistible nature of Christian experimental evidence—the inward testimony of true believers of the Bible. This mighty "cloud of witnesses" embraces men and women of all ages and conditions in life. Their previous religious beliefs may have been vastly different and contradictory; but when they received the word of the gospel, they could all unite in giving testimony to the reality of the moral and spiritual change wrought in their hearts and lives. This change is evidenced by a reformation of conduct consistent with their testimony—a fact which can not be accounted for in any other way than upon the hy-

pothesis that the Bible is the word of God.

These myriads of witnesses, drawn from among all ranks and classes of men and women in the gospel age, have uniformly testified to the divine authority of the Scriptures. They all experienced in their inner consciousness the transition from spiritual and moral darkness into the "marvelous light" of the gospel. They were thus turned "from the power of Satan unto God." They drank of the "water of life." They "tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." They "tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." The faculties by which these facts were realized were as infallible in their testimony as the physical senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

While this sort of testimony may not be accepted by those who are determined not to believe, yet the foregoing facts should carry immense weight with those who wish to investigate the proofs of the existence of God or the divine authority of the Christian's Bible. I repeat that the testimony of millions of the purest and noblest among men should carry a tremendous weight in favor of making an experimental test of the truth of the gospel.

Negative Testimony Regarding God Not Reliable

No amount of negative testimony from those who do not believe in God can be accepted as proof of the non-existence of

the Deity. "No man hath seen God at any time"; but as he addresses himself to the inner consciousness of his intelligent creatures through his revealed Word, the testimony of one individual to his reality, when he has been thus known, is more reliable than the testimony of a thousand men who because they have never seen God affirm there is no such a Being. No amount of negative testimony, therefore, is of any value when given by individuals who have never tried the means by which the existence of God may be proved. Where there is a failure to discover the reality of God, his saving grace, and the blessings enjoyed by Christians, there is always a manifest failure to obey the instructions given in the Guidebook.

No one who has followed the Bible has ever been disappointed. They may have apostatized, but while they remained true, their testimony was the same as that of others who believed God and remained faithful to the end. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isa. 1:19) is a promise that has been abundantly verified by millions of reputable witnesses over a period covering the whole of the history of man. Trials, dishonor by false accusation, poverty of the most extreme kind, persecution of the most violent type, and death in its most undesirable and horrible forms have not obscured those clear and beautiful visions of the realities of God and future eternal bliss; on the contrary, in the most trying hours, the testimony to the inner

consciousness was the strongest and clearest.

Not only have thousands of Christians given undoubted evidence of clear and unclouded convictions even in the hour of death, but the most noted infidels have failed to give the slightest evidence of their being fully convinced that they were right and were not afraid of the consequences of the day of judgment. It has been affirmed of David Hume that, having observed the consolations enjoyed by a certain Christian family, he confessed with a sigh, "that there were moments when, amidst all the pleasures of philosophical discovery, and the pride of literary fame, *'he wished that he had never doubted.'* "

The testimony resulting from the experimental tests by which millions of our fellow beings have demonstrated the existence of God and the divine authorship of the Bible, is in itself a fair answer to the skeptic. In this brief appeal to reason we have not called attention to the direct answers to prayer and the miraculous intervention of divine power as a result of prayer and faith that have been manifested through God's people in all ages, not excepting the present. Many ably written works may be obtained by those who wish further argumental testimony on this vital subject, though they are not much read in this skeptical age; but some read and believe.

CHURCH OF GOD
SECOND AND OREGON ST.
SUNDAY SERVICES
SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00 A. M.
PREACHING 11:A. M., 7:30 P. M.
WED. PRAYER M. T. G. 7:30 P. M.